

PUBLIC AFFAIRS

DESCRIPTION

The Chesterfield County Department of Public Affairs is an extension of the Office of the County Administrator charged with functioning across all organizational lines. The Department coordinates the many different functions inherent in media relations, ensuring the proper dissemination of information to community, constituent and internal stakeholders. This coordination causes a synergistic effect and enables the County to achieve its goals more effectively. The many different functions must

focus complementary messages on the same issue at the right time in the most effective mix across a variety of communication channels to well targeted audiences. Effective organization, effective planning and a focus on clear messages and themes that will further County objectives are at the heart of the task. The overwhelming voter support of the 1996 bond referendum clearly demonstrates the value of strategic communications by professional public affairs staff provided with adequate tools.

FINANCIAL ACTIVITY

	FY2000 Actual	FY2001 Adopted	FY2002 Biennial Planned	FY2002 Adopted	Change FY2001 to FY2002	FY2003 Projected	FY2004 Projected	FY2005 Projected
Personnel	\$349,565	\$351,600	\$362,000	\$385,900	9.8%	\$397,500	\$409,400	\$421,700
Operating	75,400	74,000	84,000	86,200	16.5%	86,200	86,200	86,200
Capital	<u>13,945</u>	<u>10,000</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>12,000</u>	20.0%	<u>12,000</u>	<u>12,000</u>	<u>12,000</u>
Total	\$438,910	\$435,600	\$446,000	\$484,100	11.1%	\$495,700	\$507,600	\$519,900
Revenue	<u>59,619</u>	<u>64,400</u>	<u>64,400</u>	<u>64,400</u>	0.0%	<u>64,400</u>	<u>64,400</u>	<u>64,400</u>
Net Cost	\$379,291	\$371,200	\$381,600	\$419,700	13.1%	\$431,300	\$443,200	\$455,500
FT Pos.	6	6	6	6	0	6	6	6

BUDGET ANALYSIS AND EVALUATION

The Public Affairs Department has developed a communication program centered around key target audiences, which include employees, citizens, business and government. This program focuses on basic communication themes tied to the County's vision and strategic agenda. The Department has responsibility for managing products and programs that communicate successfully with target groups across multiple communication channels. Through the use of newsletters, newspaper articles and other public announcements, the Department builds pride, enthusiasm, and morale through increasing employee awareness of Chesterfield's heritage, work force, innovations and creativity, and the variety of efforts that define value-added government service. Public Affairs consistently markets Chesterfield's attractiveness as a First Choice Community, and

reinforces the County's positive local and regional profile.

The Department has established a reputation for high levels of customer service and satisfaction, and plans to build on this foundation. The area of citizen information in an online environment is a new challenge that will solidify the County's leadership position among local governments and provide a service customers increasingly expect. A top-notch Internet presence is also a key element in attracting new business investments to the County. Public Affairs reviews all County website content and coordinates with the Information Systems Technology department on the presentation of information.

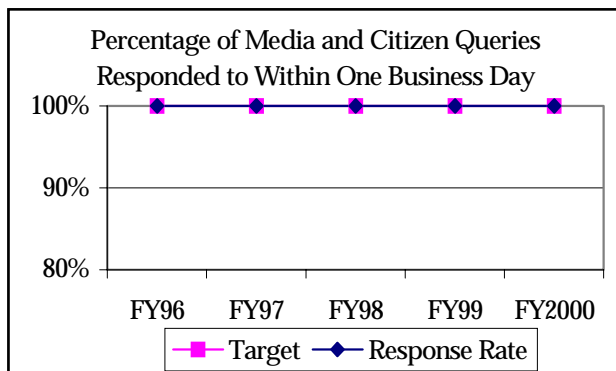
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Personnel costs comprise approximately 80% of the total departmental budget. The FY2002 budget includes funding for an additional part-time Public Affairs Officer to assist with graphic design requirements of the office. The Department's FY2002 budget also includes additional operating funds for the printing and distribution of the County's Annual Report. This document is inserted into the Community Shopper and mailed to households in the County not receiving that publication. After assessing the scope of products and services provided by Public Affairs, the County realizes significant gains via this departmental effort. There is a solid return on the investment.

Many products, i.e. newsletters, brochures, etc., are available on a free-lance, contractor basis. However, the County would lose the synergy and consistency in quality that is gained through developed in-house expertise. Management time needed to 'retrain' a contractor on every project or product is not cost-efficient. Public Affairs will look for opportunities to employ outside resources wherever it is most productive and cost efficient. Staff taking over previously privatized efforts, such as the monthly employee newsletter, has actually yielded significant cost savings, as well as recognized improvements in quality.

HOW ARE WE DOING?

Goal: To provide exemplary customer service. Supports Countywide Strategic Goal Number 1.
Objective: To foster a strong, professional relationship with all area customers
Measure: Percentage of media and citizen queries responded to within one business day

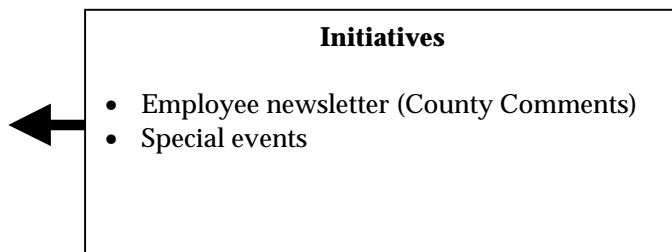
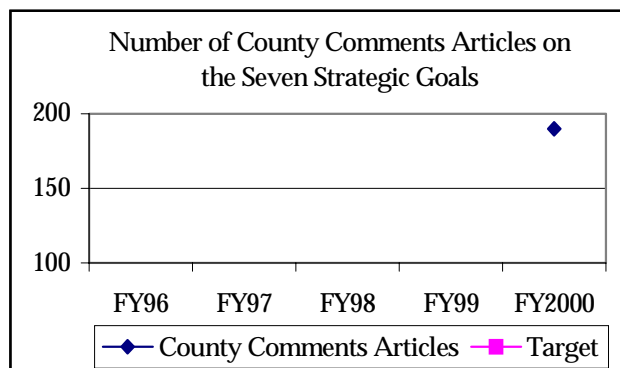


Initiatives

- Media releases
- Formal response to query system
- Media pager alert system
- 24/7 on-call crisis communication response
- Media training

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- Goal:** To educate County employees about the County's attainment of its seven Strategic Goals. Supports all Countywide Strategic Goals.
- Objective:** Develop employee awareness of County's programs and services that support the seven strategic goals
- Measure:** Number of County Comments Articles related to the County's attainment of strategic goals



Note: FY2000 was the first year of measurement for this goal. The Department will continue to measure their success in this area in future years, utilizing the actual results from FY2000 as a benchmark.

WHERE ARE WE GOING?

The changing ways in which citizens and other interested parties receive information bring new challenges to the Department of Public Affairs. The County has found that with the ever-increasing use of the Internet, customers exist on national and international levels. The Department will continue its focus on sending the message to these customers about the progress of Chesterfield County toward its seven strategic goals and its mission of being a First Choice Community.

To maintain the required level of services expected by the County's customers, despite increases in

volume and the increasing complexity of demands, the Department is streamlining internal processes and utilizing several Total Quality Improvement techniques. Program funds and the need for new technology will grow faster than salary requirements in the foreseeable future. Future year demands will also require more training and equipment for department staff as they maintain the level of service expected by their many customer groups.

The Department's projections include minimal increases in personnel costs associated with anticipated increases in benefit costs.